

# Writing a Research Paper: Generating Questions & Topics



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## **A research paper –**

1. requires you to critically think about, evaluate, organize, and compose;
2. is an assignment or project that grows over time as you interact with other sources;
3. varies in length;
4. is generally written on a topic decided by your teacher.



Typically, the hardest part of starting a paper is **starting!**



## Choosing a Topic

- How do you usually choose a topic?
  1. Read.
  2. Talk with a friend or classmate.
  3. Write down your initial thoughts about the topic.



Brainstorming Techniques:  
Let's Workshop!



Ask a Question,  
Make a List

## **Topic: Attendance in College Classrooms**

- *Possible question:*

- Should attendance be required for a passing grade?

- *Possible answers:*

- No (why?)
- Yes (why?)
- Dependent (on?)

- *Possible Reasons:*

- Students are too busy to always go to class.
- Students can't participate if they're absent.



## Freewriting

- What is **freewriting**?
  - You write without thinking, or stopping. The trick is to write whatever comes to mind, even if you trail off topic.

Let's try!



## Cubing

- Cubing is a good way to look at your topic from 6 different perspectives. Here's what you do:
  - Describe it
  - Compare it
  - Associate it
  - Analyze it
  - Apply it
  - Argue for and against it





What is Your Purpose?  
Who is Your Audience?

## **What is your purpose?**

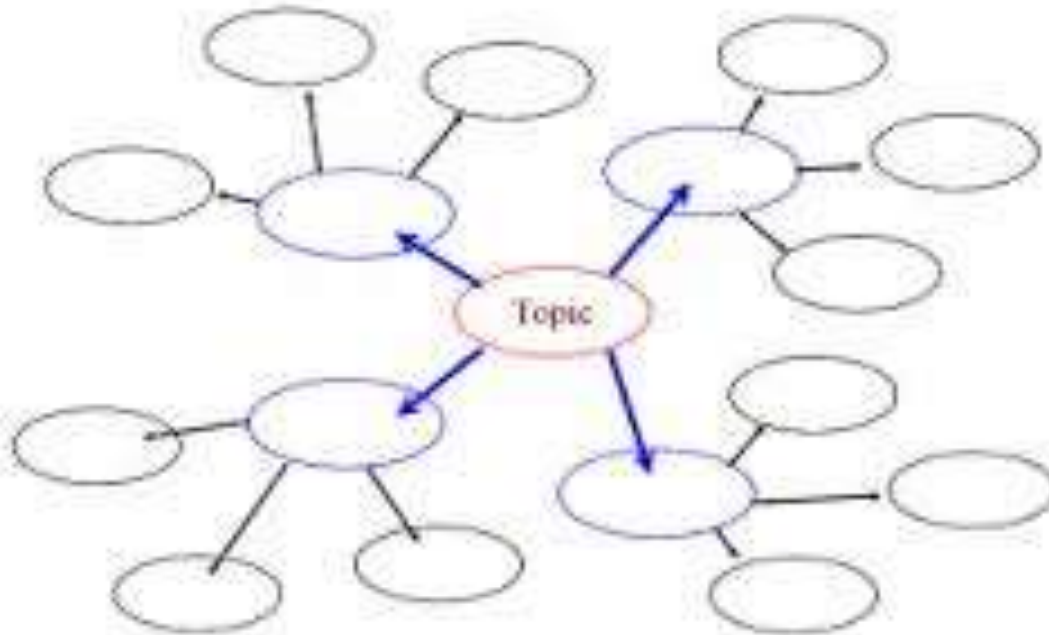
- Sometimes we get blocked because we don't know why we're writing this.

## **Who is your audience?**

- Knowing who would read about our topic helps us focus our message and find a starting point.



## Clustering/Mapping





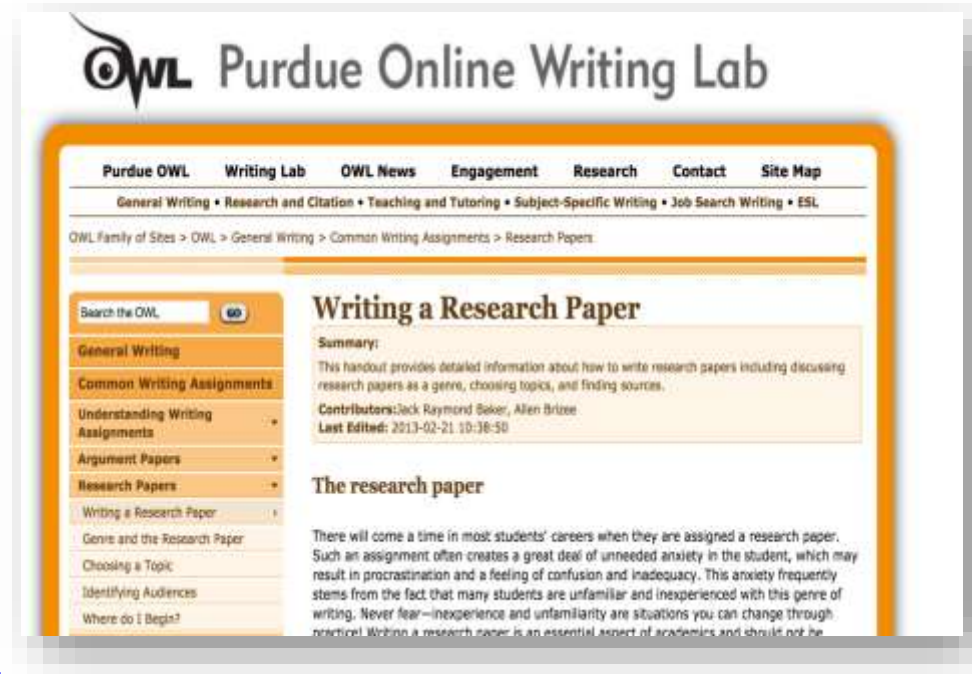
Hopefully this presentation has helped you develop some skills for thinking about topics and developing questions.

# The OWL is also Helpful

- There are many resources on the OWL's website, one of which is about research papers and generating questions.

Here's the link:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/1/>





The End

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